

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

Sub 13
5 (1) A method for purchasing a product comprising the steps of:

identifying a plurality of suppliers;

creating an information template for each supplier;

specifying the product;

searching each of the information templates for the specified product;

10 identify a supplier by use of said search; and

purchasing said product from said one identified supplier.

(2) The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

15 placing certain information on said information template of said identified supplier related to the cost of producing said product; and

reporting said certain information.

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20 (3) The method of claim 2 further comprising the steps of:

causing a design file of said product to be created;

and

evaluating said design file before purchasing said product.

25 (4) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of:

creating information relating to the operation of
said product; and

placing said information upon said template of said
identified supplier.

5 (5) The method of Claim 1 wherein said product is
selectively assembled within a vehicle.

(6) The method of Claim 1 wherein said templates are
searched over a global computer network.

(7) The method of Claim 6 wherein said global computer
10 network comprises the internet.

(8) A method for designing a product comprising the
steps of:

fixing certain attributes of the product;

using the fixed attributes to select at least one
15 component which is used to construct the product;

creating a database containing the identity of a
first and a second supplier for the at least one
component;

querying the database, effective to identify a first
20 supplier and a second supplier of the at least one
component;

contacting each of the first and second supplier by
use of a global communications network to request a
computer aided design file from each supplier describing
25 the respective at least one component provided by the
first and second suppliers;

receiving the computer aided design file; and

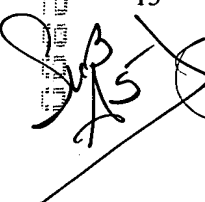
using the computer aided design file to evaluate the
at least one component respectively provided by the first
and second suppliers.

5 (9) The method of Claim 8 wherein said certain
attributes comprise certain tangible characteristics of
said product.

(10) The method of Claim 9 wherein said certain
attributes further comprise certain intangible
10 characteristics of said product.

(11) The method of Claim 10 wherein said certain
attributes further comprise interrelationship attributes.

(12) The method of Claim 10 wherein certain intangible
characteristics of said product comprise a cost of
15 obtaining said product.

 (13) A method for purchasing a product comprising the
steps of:

fixing attributes of said product;

decomposing said product into several interconnected
20 components;

identifying a plurality of suppliers;

creating an information template for each of said
plurality of suppliers, each of said information
templates containing information identifying the
25 respective products and

15
components provided by the supplier, a cost of producing each of said respectively provided products and components, and the time required to provide each of said respective products and components; and

5 searching said information templates in order to identify suppliers of said product and said several interconnected components.

(14) The method of Claim 13 further comprising the step of:

10 identifying at least one supplier of said product by use of said information templates.

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(15) The method of Claim 14 further comprising the step of:

15 identifying at least one supplier of said several interconnected components by use of said information templates.